

GOVERNMENT FIGHTS TO SAVE A MILLION LIVES

Cities and States Have Joined With Federal Authorities in Effort to Prevent Sale of Habit Forming Drugs

WHILE the chief nations of Europe are engaged in a struggle which before it is ended will doubtless result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives the Government of the United States, aided by individual States and cities, is engaged in a war which concerns the health and well being of from 1,000,000 to 4,000,000 persons. This is the war for the suppression of the drug habit. The victims of the drug habit include men, women and children and according to the drug division of the bureau of chemistry of the Department of Agriculture they number at least 1,000,000 and possibly there may be 4,000,000 of them.

States and municipalities, through Legislatures and Boards of Health, have joined hands with the Federal authorities to prevent the sale of habit forming drugs. In the State of New York the Boylan law, which went into effect July 1, has done much to check the evil and to make it impossible for the public to obtain dangerous drugs without a doctor's prescription. In New York city the Board of Health has passed regulations which have the same object in view.

While these measures have added largely in keeping habit forming drugs out of the hands of irresponsible persons, hundreds of thousands of persons throughout the United States still find it possible to obtain the drugs to the use of which they are addicted. Unscrupulous physicians and also some manufacturers of these articles are only too willing to enjoy the large financial returns which the sale of these articles makes possible.

In speaking of the drug evil and the measures which are being taken by the Government to check it L. F. Keblor, chief of the drug division of the bureau of chemistry of the United States Department of Agriculture, says:

"There are various remedies, so-called, on the market which are used from infancy to old age and which contain habit forming agents that can be purchased at almost any one. Many of the mixtures are concocted directly or indirectly through the aid of physicians, so-called. Some illicit sales of cocaine, morphine, etc., are also made by druggists, both wholesale and retail. Some physicians take advantage of the authority entrusted to them for the proper using of these habit forming agents and prescribe for all who may request them, regardless of the health and welfare of the public. Even many reputable physicians are often not circumspect enough in the writing and safeguarding of prescriptions containing these and similar drugs.

"With such conditions obtaining drug addiction has become a national evil and a great one. The question therefore naturally arises. How can it be minimized or eradicated? There is a great diversity of opinion on this point, but the following are the lines along which results may be expected:

"First—The education of the public through the press and by pamphlets, lectures, etc.

"Second—Enact laws forbidding the sale of all pernicious habit forming drugs, such as cocaine, morphine, opium, heroin, etc., and their derivatives and preparations at retail except on prescriptions of physicians, dentists or veterinarians.

"Third—Require a permanent record to be kept, subject to State and Federal inspection at all times, of all transactions in such drugs, whether wholesale, retail or through the use of prescriptions. Many States already have such laws, while others have not.

"Fourth—Enact laws forbidding the handling of any of these products except by manufacturers, wholesale and retail druggists and others legally qualified.

"Fifth—The State boards of health or other governing bodies should be empowered to withdraw the licenses of physicians who prescribe or druggists who sell these articles for other than legitimate medical purposes.

"Sixth—A Federal law should be enacted forbidding the shipment in interstate commerce of habit forming drugs

or preparations containing them except through the customary channels of trade, and then only when complete records of all transactions are kept."

Notwithstanding the fact that Federal and State legislation adverse to the indiscriminate sale and use of opium has been enacted during the past decade and that most physicians use greater circumspection than formerly when prescribing opium and its preparations and derivatives, the amount of opium, exclusive of smoking opium, which is now denied entrance into this country, consumed in the United States per capita has doubled within the last forty years. Not only has there been an increased consumption of opium, its preparations and derivatives, but larger quantities of other habit forming drugs, introduced chiefly for medicinal purposes, have been used.

For example, cocaine has been used for about twenty-five years, and the amount consumed at present is estimated approximately at not less than 150,000 ounces per annum. In addition, it is well known that large quantities of acetanilid, acetylmetidin, antipyrin, phenacetin, caffeine, chloral hydrate and smaller amounts of codeine, dionon and heroin are consumed.

The Department of Agriculture asserts that there are at least one hundred sanitariums throughout the country which are advertising treatment for drug addiction, while it is well known that thousands of cases are treated annually by physicians in private practice and general hospitals. There are at least thirty so-called mail order drug addiction cures, some of which have large patronage. One concern alone claims to have 100,000 names on its books.

Mr. Keblor, in discussing the drug evil, says:

"The medical profession, State boards of health, pharmacy boards and others interested in the public welfare have in some States instituted what might be called a crusade against the indiscriminate sale of cocaine or mixtures containing it, but owing to the fact that there are so many individuals in this country who are more interested in obtaining dollars than in the welfare of mankind, there are many ways found of evading the laws.

"For example, the druggist, in many States, is not restricted in his purchase of cocaine, heroin, morphine, etc., and there is no law, except in a few States, requiring him to keep a record of the amount of these drugs he handles in any given period.

"The result of this is that some druggists surreptitiously dispose of cocaine, morphine, heroin or similar drugs to persons known to be addicted to their use, or others introduced to them by 'cocaine sniffers.' These victims are well aware that if they give information of any character relative to their source of supply it will be cut off immediately, and the result is that the druggist can sell the commodity in this way in comparative security.

"Another source of danger is the so-called 'morphine and cocaine doctor.' The laws permit the prescribing of these agents by doctors in their regular practice, and to known drug addicts at their discretion, or as the case may demand. The result is that in some cases there is little conscientiousness exercised in the giving of these prescriptions. There are some doctors who will write a number of them for as small a fee as 25 cents.

"Another disturbing feature is the fact that some irresponsible persons obtain these commodities in various ways from others outside the jurisdiction of certain States, and peddle them within a certain other jurisdiction to their list of patrons.

"The ingenuity and cunning of these peddlers are astonishing. One specimen was discovered carrying about a book followed out for the purpose. The edges of the leaves and one of the corners were glued together and the body of the pages cut out, thus leaving a book-like box, which was small enough in outward appearance and well



Dr. L. F. Keblor, chief of Drug Division, Bureau of Chemistry, Department of Agriculture, Washington.

adapted for the nefarious business in which he was engaged."

With the exploiting and advertising of medicines containing habit forming agents it is only natural to expect that drug addiction would result. The only cause for surprise is that the number of victims is not greater than it now is. The reason for this, so experts of the bureau of chemistry of the Department of Agriculture say, probably are:

First, that the average individual is horrified to think of becoming a chronic drug user; second, that the secret of many drug habits dies with them, and third, the most common cases, such as users of cocaine, morphine, opium, etc., are short lived, most of them dying within ten years after contracting the habit. The craving for the drug, with only rare exceptions, cannot be controlled or overcome as long as the drug is obtainable, with the result that death follows.

There are at present mail order treatments for all kinds of drug addiction. All correspondence and transactions take place through the mails except the sending of the so-called cure itself. It is usually represented by the exploiter that the habit can be successfully treated at home and by the particular treatment in which the exploiter is interested, while he asserts that its composition is a profound secret known to himself alone. As a rule these remedies are composed of well known drugs, while in most instances they contain the very drug or drugs from the use of which the patient is suffering. It is well known that the drug victim is incapable of treating him or her self. The chief object of this form of treatment is to extort money from the unfortunate victims, who in many cases continue the treatment over a period of years.

Included in the products containing habit forming drugs are soothing syrups, which are given chiefly to children of course. Lost any suspicion be aroused in the mind of the mother by the fact that the presence of opium, morphine, chloroform, cannabis indica or some other harmful agent is declared on the label, the manufacturer or dealer endeavors to allay such fear by statements of the following character:

"Contains nothing injurious to the youngest babe."

"Mothers need not fear giving this medicine to the youngest babe as no bad effects come from the continued use of it."

"This preparation is free from all harmful agents," etc. Statements of this kind have been largely eliminated, but they still appear in modified form either on the outside package or in the accompanying circular.

Moderated soft drinks containing caffeine and smaller or greater quantities of coca leaf or coca products have been placed on the market. Preparations of this kind were at one time looked upon as harmless, but they are now known to be an evil. Centuries before cocaine was introduced as a remedial agent wonderful accounts of the energy creating properties of coca leaves were chronicled. The phenomenal power of endurance at one time attributed to the Peruvians and others was said to be produced by the chewing of coca leaves, and this idea has been widely exploited.

Many other preparations which are declared to be of great value in the treatment of asthma, catarrh, colds, coughs, consumption, hay fever, etc., contain powerful drugs, such as cocaine, chloral hydrate, codeine, heroin, morphine and opium. They are represented as cures that are said to be infallible or positive. They are to be seen on the shelves of thousands of drug stores.

The fact is, for instance, in the case of asthma, that the exact cause is not definitely known by the medical profession even yet. There is no known treatment, physicians say, which will eradicate the disease. The sufferer, however, is anxious to pay any price

within his power to be freed of his ailment, or at least to be relieved. To check the danger to the public health which the use of habit forming drugs has brought to the people of this country Federal, State and municipal authorities are doing whatever is possible. But it is through the public itself, only, it is felt, that the evil can be effectively checked, for without the backing of public opinion the work of organized bodies, though backed by the law, can only produce limited results.

Violations of the law is a misdemeanor and is punishable by one year in the penitentiary or by a fine of \$500, or by both. There seems to prevail an idea that all persons arrested for violation of this new anti-drug act shall be confined separate and apart from

colorful opium or any of its salts, alkaloids or derivatives, or any compound or preparation of any of them, which includes heroin, morphine and codeine).

The act does not apply to the sale of proprietary medicines sold in good faith, provided they do not contain more than a certain stated limited quantity of the prohibited drugs.

The intent and object of the law is to prevent the improper use of habit forming drugs, and in order to effect this, so it has been necessary to regulate their legitimate sale and use in order that the drugs may be checked upon and accounted for from the hands of the manufacturer to the consumer, and this is effected by means of a series of official order blanks furnished by the State to the local Board of Health and by the local Board of Health to pharmacists, druggists, physicians, veterinarians and dentists.

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Appeal to Public to Aid in Checking Spreading Evil Which Threatens to Become National—Cunning of Dope Pedlers

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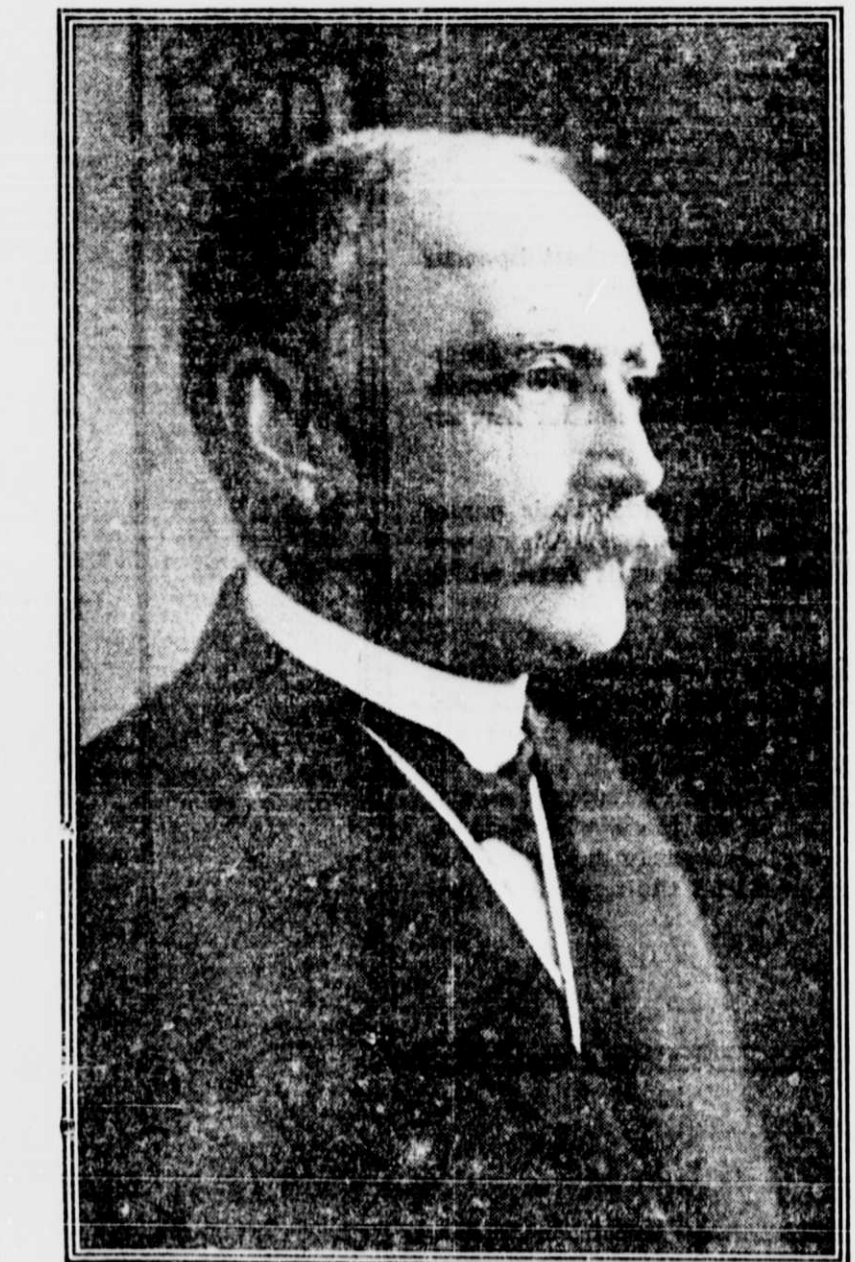
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Gen. P. W. Meldrim, President American Bar Association.

NEW PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION IS A LAWYER WHO BELIEVES IN REFORMING THE LAW

THAT the law is flexible and yields to the demands of changing economic customs and ideas, that it is a living thing and is continually adjusting itself to new commercial conditions is the view of the new president of the American Bar Association, Gen. P. W. Meldrim of Savannah, Ga., recently elected to succeed former President William Howard Taft. His opinions make his election of special significance.

Never before has judicial procedure in America been more severely arraigned by the profession and by the people than at present. It is on trial before the bar of public opinion. While business has impatiently fretted at the delays of justice and while statesmen have derided the law for its anachronisms, a group of lawyers within the American Bar Association have labored quietly and steadily to rid the law of the outworn and the archaic and to keep its development commensurate with the needs of the times. One of the leaders of this group is Gen. Meldrim. After a quarter of a century spent in this work he comes to the defence of the law and expresses an abiding confidence in its adaptability to modern needs.

After forty-four years of practice at the bar, so varied that it has taken all law as its province, Gen. Meldrim